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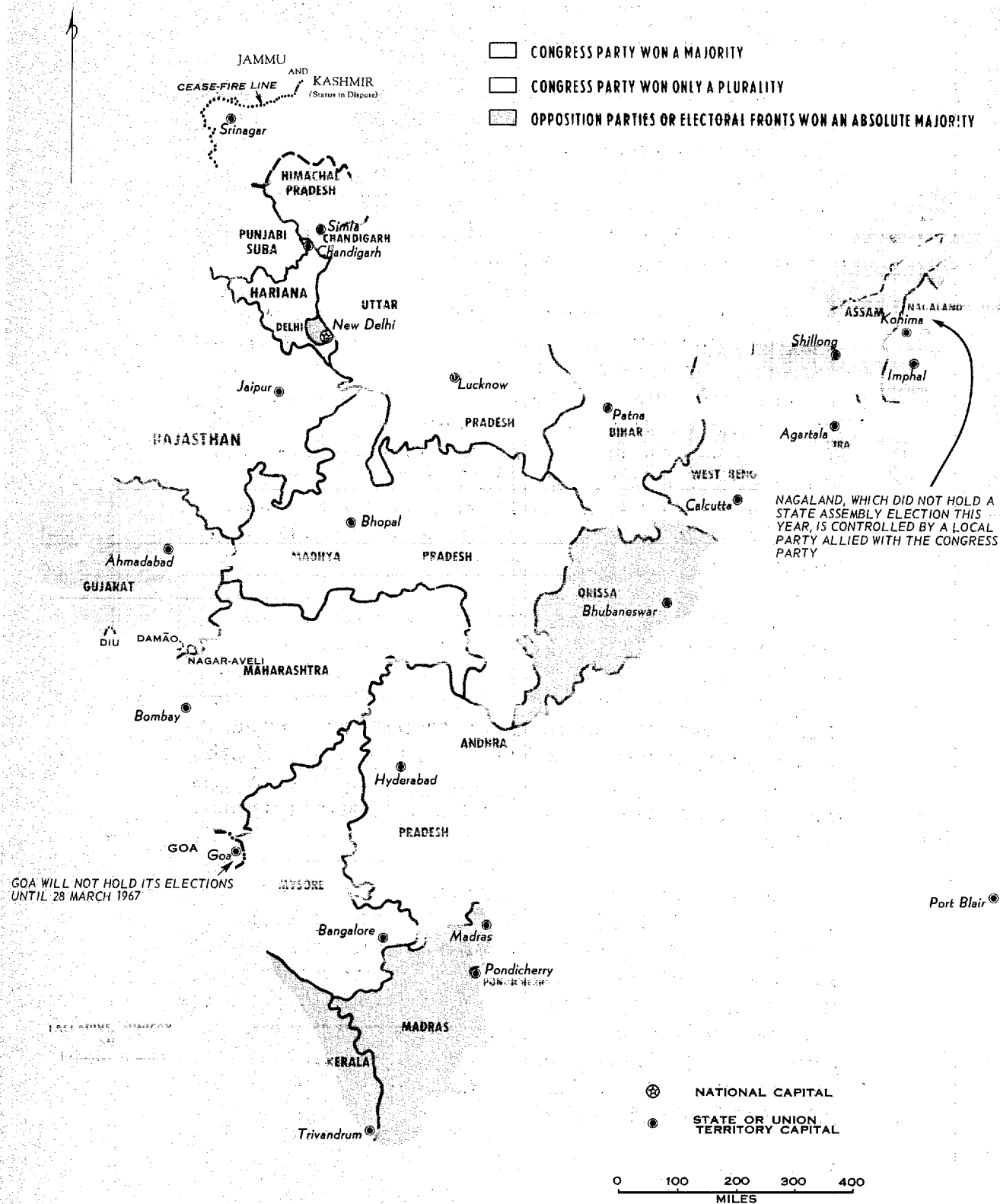
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INDIA

Outcome of February 1967 State Elections



India: Prospects for stable local governments are slim in at least five of the eight Indian states where the ruling Congress Party failed to win a majority.

New Delhi may have to impose direct rule in some states if the political situation deteriorates. The most immediate problems are in three important northwest states--Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjabi Suba--where Congress and opposition coalitions are vying for the support of independents.

An announcement on 4 March that Congress had been asked to form a government in Rajasthan sparked four days of violent demonstrations in the state capital. More widespread agitation is likely, and Congress may not survive a vote of confidence when the state assembly convenes on 14 March. No party or coalition appears capable of providing a stable government for very long.

The Punjab will have a shaky non-Congress coalition government. Congress, on the other hand, appears to have a good chance of winning over enough independents to create a fragile majority in Uttar Pradesh. In both states the margins will be so narrow that prospects for long-term stability are poor.

Anti-Congress coalitions already have come to power in two states. Strategically important West Bengal has a 13-party government in which the Peking-oriented Communists hold the important Finance Ministry portfolio. The coalition is not expected to survive for long. Drought-stricken Bihar also is being governed by an unwieldy coalition of disparate parties.

Non-Congress control of these states and the three others where opposition parties won clear majorities will make cooperation between the national and local governments more difficult. Cooperation is vital for the solution of a wide range of problems--most notably food policy.

Venezuela: The government is reacting strongly to Cuban involvement in the recent murder of the foreign minister's brother.

Cuba has published in its official press a statement by the representative of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) in Havana claiming credit for the murder and describing it as an act of "revolutionary justice." It promises that the "war to the death" will continue. The steady barrage of Cuban propaganda approving and encouraging these acts is taken by most Venezuelans as blatant interference in Venezuelan affairs and an intolerable insult to national prestige and honor. Venezuela believes that without Cuban material support the terrorism of the FALN would soon come to an end.

The murder has created widespread revulsion among private groups as well as in the government. The orthodox Communist Party has denounced it as a senseless act which serves no revolutionary purpose.

Government leaders have told the press that they will move quickly. Present plans include seeking condemnation of Cuba's role in the murder by the Organization of American States, putting pressure on Egypt, Mexico, and the United Kingdom to end activities which the Venezuelans believe facilitate Cuban subversion, and bringing the matter before the United Nations Security Council. Support from the United States is to be sought for these moves.

NOTES

NATO-Britain: [Over London's protests, NATO Secretary General Brosio has placed discussion of the proposed UK-Soviet friendship treaty on the agenda of the North Atlantic Council meeting scheduled for 15 March. In the meeting of 7 March only Canada, Denmark, and Norway supported the UK. A number of countries severely criticized the British. The UK representative said that his government could not have any further information ready by the 15th, but Brosio replied that Britain could nevertheless "usefully listen to what others had to say."]

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Pakistan-France: [Several French Air Force transports carrying officers and technicians, rockets, and, possibly, electronic equipment have landed at Rawalpindi. The French may have begun deliveries of military supplies to Pakistan, although they could be demonstrating equipment preliminary to a definite arms agreement. Pakistan has been negotiating with Paris for a wide range of equipment, including jet aircraft and submarines.]

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